

Wealthism

I live in the United Kingdom, an unfortunately monarchist and nominally democratic group of British nations. I would dispute the term “democratic” because I don’t believe that the U.K. can achieve full 100% democracy while the royal family and the House of Lords still exist. I don’t believe that royals are some kind of special person, better than the rest of us. They are in their position through unfortunate accidents of history and I would be happy to see a peaceful transition to a republican system.

I think the Irish Republic has the right idea. A democratically elected government with a president whose duties are mostly ceremonial and in service to a constitutional democracy. If it were up to me the entire British Isles would follow the pattern of the Irish Republic. There would be a Republic of England, a Republic of Wales, a Republic of Scotland and a Republic of Northern Ireland. Along with the Irish Republic this would be a group of islands constituted as five separate republics able to make their own independent choices about membership of the European Union, NATO, the Commonwealth etc.

People used to keep telling me that I was an anarchist. I don’t know why they thought that. Perhaps only because they had seen me reading books about anarchist theory. In fact I’ve looked at a lot of different types of political theory and remained fairly unimpressed by most of them. An anarchist society would only be making itself vulnerable to hostile takeover by the mafia or the fascists or some sort of system of total authoritarian population control ruled by some equivalent of an oligarchy.

After all it has taken us thousands of years to achieve some measure of personal freedom from pharaohs and despots, some small amount of human rights. Anarchy would be giving away the little bit of individual power we’ve managed to get.

An anarchical spirit, on the other hand, is a very necessary element of a freedom attitude. Anarchal spirit without total anarchy is possible and sustainable I believe.

Comparing capitalism with communism I can see that each of these offers some advantage. Capitalism offers the freedom of the individual to have IDEAS. To innovate. The freedom of entrepreneurialism. To invent a new product or a new way of doing things and to profit from your own brilliance and hard work. On the other hand, rich people cause poverty to exist and communism offers to redistribute the wealth and make everyone equal. I like both of these ideas.

Yes, I like both the freedom of the individual to make themselves rich and the power of the state to redistribute the wealth to help the poor. So how can these two principles be reconciled?

I propose a system which I shall refer to as “Wealthism”.

Wealthism would be a society in which a person is free to start their own business, make a lot of money and end up rich as a result. However, there would be a limit. You would be able to get to a certain peak of personal wealth and then any excessive wealth attained over and above the limit would be taken and redistributed to the poor.

I would set the limit, in today's money, at one million pounds (U.K.) or the equivalent amount of spending power in euros and other currencies. The currencies might change over the years and the exchange rate of those currencies would change but the maximum personal wealth would always be equivalent to the spending power of one million U.K. pounds in June 2024.

No-one needs more personal wealth than that.

There would be millionaires but there would never again be any billionaires. The poor would be less poor and the rich would still have all that that they could honestly need.

Of course there would still be greed and greedy people would try to trick the system by squirrelling away extra millions in disguised accounts. I would expect there to be a government department tasked with finding these cheats and bringing them to justice. Justice would be real justice symbolised by the scales weighing out what is fair.